

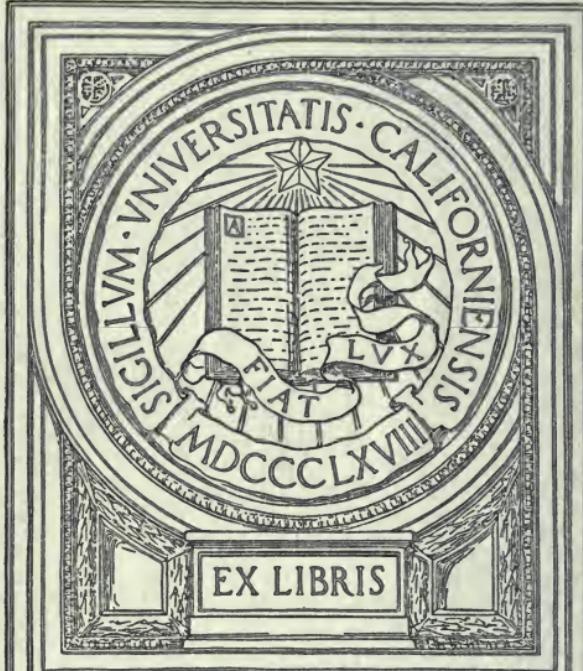
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VIOLET FANE



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first edition

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Currie, Mary

POEMS.

LONDON : PRINTED BY
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AND PARLIAMENT STREET

FROM DAWN TO NOON.

POEMS

BY

VIOLET FANE *pseud.*

[Mary (Lamb) Singleton Currie]

To sit alone
And think for comfort how, that very night,
Affianced lovers, leaning face to face,
With sweet half listenings for each other's breath,
Are reading haply from a page of ours,
To pause with a thrill (as if their cheeks had touched)
When such a stanza, level to their mood,
Seems floating their own thought out—'So I feel
For thee—and I for thee'.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

LONDON :
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1872.



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TO HIM.

I DEDICATE these few poor lines to *Him*,—
Love of my Life ! Dearest of my desires !—
The one who kindled in my breast those fires
Which neither time nor tide can dull or dim :

Some, written in the dew of earlier tears
Than longings for his love have caused to flow,
And others written in the sunny glow
Of years which he has bless'd,—thrice happy years !

I give Him not alone the thoughts I frame,
With them, the erring heart from which they sprung,
With them, the dearest accents that my tongue
Can kiss into the music of His name !

Oh ! could I write out on a golden scroll
The essence of my being ! I would then
Leave but my hollow shell for other men,
And give Him, with my Life and Love,—*my Soul* !

I

D A W N.



‘Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet !’

LONGFELLOW.

B

THE poetry that lies within the soul
Cannot be written, nay, the greatest poet
Is he who keeps the treasure in himself.
Once given birth to, this enchanting music
Is often play'd by tuneless instruments ;
This lovely flow'r, whose colours beam'd so fair
In the dim forests of the inmost soul,
Fades often when it meets the eye of day.
These living pictures glowing in the heart,
Strange, sweet, and variable,—in an hour
Thousands created, often, when described
Lose more than half their beauty. For these thoughts
Are thoughts, and thoughts alone,—the pow'r of speech
Destroys them, as a ray of mid-day sun
Melts Winter's handiwork on frozen panes.
This sweet entanglement of daylight dreams,
Like creepers, with their growing tendrils twined
Round the heart's core, cannot be disengaged
Uninjured or unmixed, for where is he
Who shaking down the clusters of the vine

Knows each and ev'ry grape, or can discern
One from another? Thus with poet's dreams!
This unsung poetry, when written down
And shackled in the narrow bonds of verse,
Is made so poor, so weak beneath the load
Of such unnatural clothing, and the weight
Of high-flown words, that it becomes ere long
No poetry at all. So bear with this!



MOONLIGHT.

HIGH midst the stars the moon is risen,
Amongst the fleeting clouds that chase
Each other o'er the vault of heaven
 Into those mighty realms of space,
Which far beyond all human sight
Expand in floods of golden light.

Beneath, the trees repeat some hist'ry
 Replete with awe, for each one's head
Sways o'er its shade, a space of myst'ry
 Upon the glade where it is spread ;
This is the fairest, softest hour,
When all Unseen, Unknown, hath pow'r.

The Queen of Night her face beholdeth
 In yon clear stream, that quivers gay,
Shaking the image fair it holdeth
 As tho' to carry it away
Upon its wave. Ah ! foolish stream !
Thou art enchanted by the beam !

This heart would fain to shake from off it
A light as bright that weighs it down,
The light of eyes that seem to scoff it,
A proud cold brow, that seems to frown.
Yet, as without the moon yon stream,
So is it dark without their beam !

I try, like yonder restive river,
To cast the fair remembrance hence,
But like it, I must hold for ever
That cruel light, at sad expense
Of happiness and peace, until
The spell is broken by *his* will !



THREE NAMES.

UPON an oak tree's rugged bark
There is a faintly 'graven mark,
Carved by this hand, when it was young.
It is a name, and on this tongue
The sounding of that name was evermore
In those sweet days of yore !

Upon a tombstone on the green
Some letters, deeply traced, are seen ;
'Tis the name of the one who lies asleep
Beneath that little grassy heap,
Where flowers bloom above the head
Of the dear remember'd dead,
Whose short terrestrial race is run,
And these two names belong to one.

But there is yet another place,
Where, in deeper letters far, I trace
That self-same name. The hardy oak
May fall beneath the woodman's stroke,
And its bark, which bears that name so fair,
May be borne away, I know not where,

The name engraved upon the stone
With moss is almost overgrown,
And those who knew it not before
Could scarcely guess what name it bore;
But neither Time, nor tide, nor place
Can by their influence efface
From this sad heart that cherish'd name
Written upon the oak, the same
That is engraved upon the stone,
And these three names belonged to one,
To one who once was true and kind—
These names an angel left behind !



SONG.

IT was a Dream, and it is dreamt ;
 'Tis gone,—'tis past,—'tis fled.
 But, oh ! its Spirit is with me still,
 Though all besides is dead !

And it haunts me yet, by the light of day,
 Beneath the sun's glad beam,
 And it haunts me in the midnight hour,
 This Spirit of my Dream !

Oh ! would that I could dream again
 A dream as fair and bright !
 Then would I sleep my life away
 And turn my day to night !

Oh ! it was like the falling star
 That flashes through the sky,
 Or like the echo from afar
 Of some sweet melody.

But now that star has fall'n to earth,
I hear no more that strain,
Though the echo of its sweetness
For ever will remain !



TIME.

“ Time is ! ”
 “ Time was ! ”
 “ Time is past ! ”

*(Spoken by the Brazen Head made by
 FRIAR BACON.)*

TIME is a great Destroyer—all have told,
 Or else *may* tell (such is the fate of all !)
 Of hearts that 'neath his touch have waxen cold,
 Of blossoms that his winds have made to fall !

Time is a great Physician—he can heal
 The wounds that others strive to bind in vain ;
 He can remove the poison'd barb of steel,
 And only leave the memory of pain !

Time is no Flatterer—his dusky wings
 Cannot be stay'd with riches or with might ;
 Nay, over those to whom he brings good things
 He seems to wing most rapidly his flight.

Time is a Necromancer—he can change
What once we lov'd,—the place, the heart, the face,
Into a thing at once so sadly strange
That memory no semblance there can trace !

Time is a Sexton—and he daily delves
A thousand graves in which the Past is laid,
Until at length his votaries themselves
Forget the griefs which made them seek his aid !

Time is a Conqueror—and his magic wand
Can crush the gate which Cæsar smote in vain ;
Behold around the traces of his hand,
A mighty city crumbling on the plain !

Time is Immortal—he will ever fly
As he *has* flown thro' centuries of light :
Waste not his hours,—for, reader, you and I
Have but a moment to observe his flight !



LINES.

I SAW so bright, so fair a thing,
Of red, of blue, of green,
A feather from an angel's wing
I deemed it must have been.

I seized it, with impatient grasp,
All eager for my prize,
When, lo ! it was a poisonous asp
With red malicious eyes !

The wound inflicted by its sting
I bear unto this day ;
I trust so fair, so foul a thing
May never come your way !



A LOCK OF HAIR.

HOW small a thing is this ! and yet how great,
How puissant with its tearful memories !

'Tis a remembrance of that Sleeping One,
And echoes back the music of a voice
Which has these many years been hush'd to us !

We said that she should ever live to us :
We laid her in her grave, and silently
Each mourner made a vow that years might pass,
That friends might die, and new ones fill their place,
Yet *she* should dwell with us ; of ev'ry heart
That lov'd her when in life, she should, in death,
Become the silent occupant, and this,
Looking into her grave, we each one swore !

So time pass'd on, and with each year the wound
(At first seemingly so incurable,
And bleeding fresh with ev'ry fresh allusion
To the sad past), heal'd slowly, unawares.

The place was changed, old memories crept out,
Then fairer, newer ones, all furtively
Slunk in their place.

With friends it was the same ;
Their fresh and many faces half confus'd us.
That sweet pale face grew paler and more pale
As years pass'd on, dimmer and yet more dim ;
We thought of her, 'tis true, but not as we
Had thought of her before. She seem'd a form
Like to an angel, beautiful and fair,
But indistinct. She was a shadowy thing,
Full of angelic beauty ! but her face
(That dear, dear face we kiss'd in days of yore),
Which one amongst us now remembers it ?

I cannot speak for others, but by me,
Oh ! Absent One ! thou art remember'd !
Thy silent voice, in shadowy dreams,
Has held communion with my spirit !
Upon my lips thy dear unutter'd name
Has often linger'd. I have often
Thought o'er its music, and ten thousand times
Spelt o'er its sweetness silently ; but when
I find thy shadow growing dim again

(Lest it should fade from out my memory,
Leaving no faintest trace behind, whereby
To know thee, if again in higher realms
We chance should meet), I gaze from time to time
Upon this lock of thy dear dark brown hair
As I am gazing now, and then, oh! C !
I see thee once again ; I know thee then ;
I hear thy voice once more, it teaches me
What is the worth of Life. I see the world
In all its smallness. Then I long, dear C
For that uncertain time, when with my burden
I may rest by thy side, and be, like thee,
Only remember'd by the few who lov'd me !



HOPE.

F AINT Star of Hope ! Far on the dark horizon
 Of my sad life, thy rays fall tremblingly
 Upon my heart ; a moment there they linger,
 Then lend to others their sweet brilliancy,
 Leaving my soul in darkness worse than dying !

Oh, fickle Light ! when wilt thou cease to glimmer
 Around this broken altar ? Long in darkness
 It hath been shrouded, and thy rays forsake it
 'Ere its dark crevices are lighten'd by them.
 Oh, cruel Light ! Here shed thy beams for ever,
 Or leave me quite ! I could not be so hopeless
 As when I see the shade of what I hope for
 Too faint to grasp !



SONG.

THERE is a lustre in thine eye
 Which only sheds its beams for me,
 There is a language in thy smile
 Which others may not see !

There is a music in thy voice
 Which only echoes in *my* ear,
 There is a sadness in thy laugh
 Which others do not hear !

Thou hast a beauty of thine own
 Which others do not care to see—
 There is a secret in thy heart,
 'Tis only told to me !



REMEMBERED VOICES.

WHEN the sun's last rays have vanished
 From the distant hill,
 In the silence of the twilight
 I can hear them still,—
 Dear and unforgotten Voices !
 I can hear you still !

As I gaze upon the shadows
 Length'ning on the plain,
 Eyes that now are closed for ever
 Beam on me again,—
 Well remember'd eyes ! long slumb'ring !
 Wake to me again !

Happy hour ! yet mix'd with sadness,
 Ere the candles beam,
 Let me pause, as on the threshold
 Of some pleasant dream,—
 Ere the light dispels the darkness
 Let me dream my dream !

• • • • •

If before thee I should travel
To the unknown shore,
Thus it is that I would linger
Near to thee once more,—
I would linger in the gloaming
Near to thee once more !

What is Absence, then, or dying ?
What, to meet or part,
If our memory lives for ever
In some faithful heart ?—
I would die, if I might linger
Only in *one* heart !



IN THE WOOD.

I WANDER'D in the wood alone,
The ev'ning mist fell soft and grey,
And stars were peeping one by one
To say *that* day was dead and gone,
Alas ! for ever and for aye !

•
Oh ! little Star ! I know so well
The gentle falling of thy rays !
Upon thy light I love to dwell,—
Thy sad, soft light, which seems to tell
A history of other days !

How many hearts, how many eyes
Are lifting now themselves afar,
How many mystic thoughts arise,
How many buried memories
Out of the image of that star !

Upon my cheek I do not feel
The breath of Autumn's chilly wind,
For Summer zephyrs seem to steal
Upon my senses, and the Real
Is fading fast from out my mind.

I mind me when these trees were clad
With leaves that round me now are blown,
I mind me when my heart was glad,
When I was never pale and sad,
And did not wander thus alone.

Oh ! when the Spring again appears,
When flow'rs are bright and thrushes sing,
Then will these eyes have dried their tears,
And will the Spring of after years
Be like in aught that bygone Spring ?

Oh ! will the flow'rs seem half as sweet,
And will the sunshine look as bright,
And will the moments fly as fleet,
And will this heart begin to beat
As once before, when it was light ?

.

Was it for this that Earth was fair ?

Was it for this that Love was given ?
That we should look on empty air
And think on that which once was there,
Yet never, never grasp our heaven ?

Can Joy survive each thought of Spring ?
Does Night set in e'er close of Day ?
Does Pleasure end in sorrowing ?
And Love, in such a wither'd thing
As yon sere leaf that strews my way ?

Alas ! I would that I could say !
I would that Spring could ever last,
That Hope would never fade away,
That Life could be one long To-day,
So we should never know a Past !



“OH! SING THAT SONG YOU SANG
BEFORE!”

O H ! sing that song you sang before
When Life seemed bright and fair !
Before the mem’ries and the tears
Of alter’d times and after years
Had risen bleak and bare ;

And like a wall, between our hearts
Had shut out Hope and Truth,
And tinged the brightest years of Life
With darker thoughts, and keener strife
Than well became our youth !

Oh ! sing that song you sang before !
And as its notes shall ring,
I’ll close my eyes and dream once more
That I am as I was of yore
When last I heard you sing !

TO

*L*IKE me a little, since thou wilt not love me,
Let me be *something* to thee in thy life,
Something to 'mind thee of thy youth and beauty,
When both have left thee, in those after years
Which thou mayst live to see as well as others ;
Then think of me, as one who stood apart
And worshipp'd thee in silence and in sorrow,—
Then think of me, and give me of thy heart
(Whether I am alive or dead, what matters ?)
A larger share than thou canst spare me now !



A DREAM.

LAST night, like a ray of light,
In a dream she lingered by me—
Loved, but not lost to me quite,
Since, in the dim stilly night
 Sometimes so lovingly nigh me,
That the soft flow of her hair
(Dusky, all save here and there
 Where the gold shadow just lights it),
Has hover'd my couch above,
Like the tame flight of a dove
 Ere merciless hawk affrights it !

C ! the touch of thy hand
Last night, in the unnamed land
 Somewhere 'twixt waking and sleeping,
Silenced the voice of my sighs,
And swept from my sorrowful eyes
 All the sad tears I was weeping,
Close to my heart sad and lone,
Wearied with sorrows unknown,

As thy dear gentle hand lingers,
Sorrow, and Sin, and unrest
Seem not to survive in my breast
The touch of thy soothing fingers !

•
Oh ! never forgotten dream !
Like a bright heavenly beam,
Come and revisit me often !
C ! the cares which each day
Crowd round my darkening way,
Nightly thy presence shall soften !

Dearest ! what dangers can harm
When thy dear guardian arm
Clasping securely around me,
Shuts from my soul, like a veil,
All that could tempt and assail
And ever seek to confound me ?
Thus, thus, for a little while,
With thy soft reproving smile,
C ! continue to guide me,
Till, with my hand in thine own,
I, to the country unknown
Some day may journey beside thee !

H E is gone ! He is gone ! and as a page unwritten,
 Or only traced with what is good and brave,
 So his young life, which all too early smitten,
 Sends home his soul unto the God who gave.

As some bright bird, sent from a heav'nly palace
 To linger for a while in this sad world,
 Or as some water-flower, whose spotless chalice
 Has only to the zephyr been unfurl'd.

So was his soul ! That bird has flown for ever
 Back to those golden realms, more fair than these ;
 That sweet white flow'r has floated down the river,
 Leaving to us its fragrance on the breeze.

Oh ! if in Heav'n there is some *highest* Heaven,
 Some place where happiness is doubly known,
 Surely a dwelling-place will there be given
 To the pure soul so early heav'n-ward flown !

And if the ones who now are sadly gazing,
On all that makes his absence seem more drear,
Could, to that distant land their eyes upraising,
Pierce through the veil which hides him from them
here;

There, with the Angels, who like him have striven,
For those rich blessings, still by us unguess'd,
They would behold, in God's eternal Heaven,
Him who on earth had been beloved the best



“DO NOT FORGET ME!”

DO not forget me ! when the day is ending,
 And dark’ning shadows gather o’er the sea ;
 Sometimes alone, and near this casement bending,
 Pause in the twilight and remember me !

Think on the brightness of the summer weather,
 Years, years ago, one well-remember’d day,
 When to the woods we wander’d forth together,
 Amongst the primroses and blue bells gay.

Time changes all ! those blossoms now are faded,
 Or, if they bloom, they do not seem as fair
 As once before, when, by the beech-trees shaded,
 You twined them tenderly amongst my hair.

I dash away the tear, that all unbidden
 Arises, when I think that this is past,
 And muse on all my anxious heart has hidden
 Since the sad ev’ning when I saw you last !

Earth has enough of heav’n to gild its sorrow
And turn the current of its griefs away,
Could we but learn to dread no dark To-morrow,
And live for ever in one glad To-day !

Whilst *I* have mused in solitude and sadness
On all the changes fleeting time can bring,
Others have hallow’d to you, with their gladness,
The happy hours of many another Spring.

All this I know, yet when the shadows darken,
And when none other better loved is by
To mark your silent mood, perchance, or hearken
To the soft echo of a half-heaved sigh ;

Then lend to me that hour of soft emotion,
And link’d in spirit let us leave the shore,
And floating o’er the dark mysterious ocean,
Be unto one another as before !

Do not forget me ! when the day is ending,
And dark’ning shadows linger o’er the sea,
Sometimes alone, and near this casement bending,
Pause in the twilight and remember me !

“SHE CANNOT LOVE HIM AS
WELL AS I.”

HE cannot love him as well as I,
There are so many who throng her round,
And she forgetteth, when they are by,
The very colour of his eye,
And of his voice the sound !

She hath loved others so well, so long,
This can be only a passing whim;
The faint last echoing of a song
Ling’ring awhile behind the throng,
Which was not sung for him !

Ah ! she might have loved him once, and well,
But her own heart says it is now too late,
And that with the bitterness which Life
Hath planted in her like a knife,—
'T were easier to hate !

Yet how he loves still to linger nigh,
And to tread that too well trodden shore,
To drink of the fount which half is dry,
And read that fable in her eye
So often read before !

And thus it hath been since man was born,
And 'tis thus the web of life is wove,
Ah ! and even I, the while I mourn,
Know not the heart of him I scorn,
Or e'en of him I love !



THE LAST OF HEAVEN.

I HAVE heard of the last of *Earth*,
 Of the last faint sigh that is given
By the weary soul, ere it takes its flight
To those unknown realms of endless light
 For which it has hoped and striven,—
But now, oh ! I feel in the dim sad light
Of the day that is fading fast into night,
 I have tasted my last of *Heaven* !



“SPEAK OF THE PAST.”

SPEAK of the Past, for ever flown,
 It is not often that we may ;
 Thy words seem like stray blossoms blown
 From those dead flow'rs of yesterday,
 Or like the feathers from the wings
 Of angels that have pass'd away !

To dream on what was but a dream,
 To wait and watch, in vain, in vain !
 To long in darkness for a beam
 Of that past hope which now is slain ;
 To look and long, to watch and pray
 For that which cannot be again :

This is the madness of my soul,
Thy love can never reach as far,
 There are two halves in ev'ry whole,
 But these, in Love, unequal are ;
 And when *I* know how great is mine,
 I feel, perforce, how small is thine !

Yet, if alike our loves were given,
Only awhile would last the spell,
And lend our lives one ray of heaven,
Only to dash them down to hell !
There is a dying worse than Death,
And *I* should taste of that as well !

Then, though 'tis madness in our eyes,
Yet sometimes speak of what is past ;
Some bright unhop'd-for star may rise
To light one moment's gloom at last,—
Till then, with coldness darken not
The night in which my lot is cast !



“FAREWELL!”

AND now farewell ! I fain would shake
 The links that bind my heart to thee ;
 Those useless fetters I would break
 And let the 'prison'd one go free !

When thou art absent from my sight,
 And other eyes around me shine,
 I try to think those eyes as bright,
 As full of life and love as thine.

• • • • •
 What care I for another's love—
 Another's kisses on my cheek ?
 Another's lips repeating words
 I fear that *thine* will never speak ?

I know not why my spirit sighs,
 For other hearts are seeking mine ;
 And I can read in other eyes
 The tenderness I miss in thine.

Yet 'tis in vain ! Thy friendship cold—
The calm esteem I have from thee,
Is dearer, oh ! ten-thousand fold,
Than Love, which others give to me !



LINES.

THEY tell me I am much too young
 To muse upon the Past—
 That I am but a child, they say
 I should be living for To-day,
 Whilst youth's short pleasures last.

They tell me *they* have had their Past,
 Their happy Yesterday ;
 They say if *now* my life be sad,
 What will it be when I have had
Real sorrows, such as *they* ?

Alas ! I know I may become
 E'en sadder at the last,
 But *now* I sigh, as well as *they* ;
 For young and fair, and old and grey,
 We all have had a Past !



TO . . .

I LEAVE thee now, if I could ever love thee,
 Fate hath prevented such a consummation,
 And nipped the bud ere yet it was a blossom !

I leave thee ! and with thee, may be, I lose
 My hold on Happiness, on Life, on Love ;
 I leave thee, and in flying thee, may be
 I fly a snare, an error, or a heart
 Broken unwittingly by fickleness !

Thou art so often present in my thoughts,
 Yet in thyself but yet so dimly known,
 'Tis well I cannot read within thy heart,
 Perhaps its bitter mock'ry of my own !

Oh ! Heart unknown ! If thou hast ever mused,
 As I have done, upon a half-closed book,
 Hoping its pages fraught with sympathies,
 Or learnt the eager language of a look—

Then thou hast known me better than I deemed ;
The speaking language of our meeting eyes
Has made us friends already, and our hearts
Linked with unuttered mystic sympathies !

Adieu, then, *Friend* ! I leave thee, once again
To thy blue eyes I look my last farewell !
I leave with thee, perchance, my Hope, my Life,
Perchance my curse, my death, for who can tell ?



THREE WISHES.

1.

I ONLY ask'd to love thee, 'twas a boon
 I deem'd the haughtiest would scarcely spurn ;
 I only ask'd to give thee all my heart,
 And pray'd for nothing in return !

2.

I loved thee then, and with no common love,
 But with that love another wish there grew,
 And fervently I pray'd both day and night
 That *thou* might'st some day love me too !

• • • • •

3.

That time is past ; but in these many days
 Since the bright summer-time when last we met,
 Another wish, another pray'r I raise—
 That wish, that pray'r is—*to forget* !

“ HE IS NOT HERE ! ”

THE voice of Spring is whisp’ring through the land,
“Rejoice, sad one ! who through the long dim
days’
Of dismal Winter’s reign, wert wont to stand
And sigh in darkness for the sun’s bright rays—
Rejoice ! for Nature will not hear thee sigh—
This is no time for musings lone and drear”—
Yet sighing only can my heart reply
“ In vain, I cannot smile,—*he* is not here ! ”



“ARE WE REMEMBERED?”

OFTEN, when hearts are beating high,
 When pleasure beams from ev'ry eye ;
 When sounds of music rise and fall,
 And laughter rings through festive hall ;
 Unseen ones mingle with the crowd,
 And voices murmur, half aloud,
 “Are *we* remember'd ?”

• • • • • • • •
 Ah ! gentle eyes ! in many a dream
 Since last you closed, I've seen you beam !
 Dear voices ! I can hear you now
 Murm'ring in accents soft and low,
 “We *are* remember'd !”

A year ago—a month, may be—
 And they were smiling here, as we ;
 A year from now, and *we*, as they,
 To other beating hearts may say,
 “Are we remember'd ?”

Then may the answer be the same,
From faithful lips, whereon our name
Lingers unutter'd ! Blest are they
Who in a world of change can say,

“ We *do* remember ! ”





WRITTEN ON SAND.

I WROTE upon the shining sands
 The name that I loved the best,
Ere I saw the sun, in a glow of light,
 Sink down in the distant West.

Then the wild sea-breeze blew loud and shrill,
 Yet I linger'd by the shore,
Till the waves crept over the written word,
 And I saw that name no more !

And though it was only a written word,
 Yet I would that it had stay'd,
For I learnt a lesson true and sad
 As I watched those letters fade !

And I wonder'd if there was a land—
 A far-off heavenly place—
Where the letters traced on the heart's warm sand
 Time's waves would not efface.

II.

N O O N.



“ Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart,
’Tis woman’s whole existence ”

BYRON.

TO

I TAKE my pen, and almost weep to find
 That I can only write of what I know—
 Athwart the shrunken mirror of my mind
 No varied forms pass glitt'ring to and fro.

No clanking forms of gallant knights and squires
 Whose glories once my childish voice would praise,
 No feudal castles, from whose turret spires
 The captive maid her ev'ning song would raise.

(That song the earl might hear, who rode hard by
 In bright array, and echoing through the dell
 Her voice might reach his heart, and he might try
 To win her love who sang to him so well,

But ah ! she loved his page ! . . .) Thus did the charms
 Of mediæval fancy ebb and flow ;
 My soul seem'd all astir with men at arms,
 My eager heart dream'd only of the foe !

Palfrey and falcon—helm and nodding plume,
The sheen of armour and the gleam of spears,
Made of my brain a kind of lumber-room
Stored with these relics of the bygone years.

But now how changed ! To me *one* knight alone
Seems to deserve the honour of his spurs ;
And the one heart my heroine deems her own
Seems to beat all as loyally as hers !

I am my own unworthy heroine now,
And *you* the noble knight with gallant crest ;
Your colours blush triumphant on my brow,
Your waving pennon flutters o'er my breast !

And so I write of Love—my waking dream,
And so I write of you, and only you,
And all monotonous my songs must seem
To those who cannot love you as I do.

Yet, as the limpid waters of a stream
Are still the same, though view'd from either shore,
So on the changeless river of my dream
Flows to the same soft music evermore.

Its source is in the heart that beats for you ;
And onward to the flood-gates of the tomb
Its waters glisten with the self-same hue,
Save where or shine or shade lends light or gloom.

Take then the flow'rs it bears upon its wave ;
And should your wand'ring fancy find them fair,
Think that your breath alone their fragrance gave,
Nor scorn to gather what you planted there.

Take all the gold thatmingles with its sand ;
Since, like the Hebrew Prophet long ago,
Yours was the wond'rous touch, the magic wand,
That smote the rock and bade the waters flow !

"FOR EVER AND FOR EVER!"

I THINK of all thou art to me,
 I dream of what thou canst not be ;
 My life is curst with thoughts of thee
 For ever and for ever !

My heart is full of grief and woe,
 I see thy face where'er I go ;
 I would, alas ! it were not so
 For ever and for ever !

Perchance if we had never met,
 I had been spared this mad regret,
 This endless striving to forget,
 For ever and for ever !

Perchance if thou wert far away,
 Did I not see thee day by day,
 I might again be blithe and gay,
 For ever and for ever !

Ah, no ! I could not bear the pain
Of never seeing thee again !
I cling to thee with might and main,
For ever and for ever !

Ah, leave me not ! I love but thee !
Blessing or curse, which e'er thou be,
Oh ! be as thou hast been to me,
For ever and for ever !



THE SECRET.

THE words I dare not tell to *thee*,
To Earth and Sky, to flow'r and tree,
I softly breathe : the Summer's shine
Has warm'd those whisper'd words of mine ;
The Winter's snow, the Autumn's blast
Have guess'd my secret as they pass'd ;
The sparkling waves of tideless seas
Have learnt it of the murmuring breeze ;
Yet all unchanged,—no Summer glow
E'er thaw'd thy breast, oh ! Winter Snow !
At those warm words ! Oh ! sunny sea !
Thou art as thou wert wont to be !
Thy fickle wavelets kiss the shore,
Then lose themselves for evermore ;
The blast unheeding, hurries by,
No meteor flashes through the sky,
As, leaning from my casement's height,
I tell my Secret to the Night.

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Oh ! if, like Nature, all unmoved,
Thou, too, couldst learn how thou wert loved,
If what thy heart may long have guess'd
Raised no emotion in thy breast,
But that felt by the wanton child
Who breaks the toy on which it smiled ;
If, having gain'd it, this poor prize
Should seem the poorer in thine eyes,
And grow more worthless worn and won,—
Then am I right to breathe to none
Save Earth and Sea, and Sky above me,
The words, “I love thee, oh ! *I love thee !*”



A THOUGHT.

AT night, as lying half awake
 I muse upon my soul's desire,
 Out of the embers of the fire
 There seems to glide a glitt'ring snake.

Sucking my life, with poisonous hate
 That serpent coils till morning's rise,
 And whispers, "On *his* bosom lies
 A dearer form—a warmer weight."

Oh ! if from coiling near my heart
 That viper would become my friend !
 If its soft gliding tongue would end
 This aching wound from which I smart ;

Then I would call it by some name,
 Love or Despair (which would be best ?)—
 And pressing it unto my breast
 Would fondle it, and make it tame !

ANOTHER THOUGHT.

O H ! cling to me still ! Do not move !
 Yet awhile press thy heart to my heart,
 And kiss into the Life of my Love
 Darling ! its *Soul*, which thou art !

Warm with the warmth of thy breath,
 And light with the light of thine eyes,
 The life I would raise from the death
 We have died to the World and its ties !

Oh ! lend it the sound of thy voice,
 Oh ! lend it the charms of thy face,
 And dress the dear hope of my choice
 In thy garments of beauty and grace.

So that, e'en should'st thou, Darling, depart,
 Should I nestle no more in thy breast,
 I may still to the *heart of my heart*
 Press the flow'r of the love thou hast blest ?

Ah ! then I could wander alone,
Whilst bearing that burden of bliss,
My Darling's yet doubly my own,
Sweet echo of moments like this !



BURNING LETTERS.

BURN, burn, oh ! burning letters !
Alas ! and as ye fade away,
So may the love that once inspired you,
So may the heart that once desired you,
Before the breath of Time decay !

Oh ! words that have been warm'd with kisses !
Oh ! words that have been wet with tears !
Oh ! words that have been bless'd and cherish'd !
What will remain, when ye have perish'd,
To light me in the coming years ?

How shall I know my Darling loved me,
Oh ! by what sign, since kisses die ?
Since lips grow silent, and cold faces
Learn to forget the burning traces
Of love which has been long put by ?

Oh ! dear blue eyes ! that I have lived for !

You look'd upon this written line !

Oh ! hands that traced these tender phrases !

Oh ! lips, that once could sing my praises,

How fondly you have clung to mine !

How can I burn what He has written,

What I so long have hidden *here* ?

How can I banish thus completely

All these dear words, which sound so sweetly,

All these sweet names, which are so dear ?

Yet oh ! 'tis better they should burn now,

Whilst *His* warm heart still beats for me,

Than that, upon some dark to-morrow,

I should gaze on them, in my sorrow,

And say, "These words are warm—not *He*!"

Ah ! though I would for ever cherish

Each word that He could write or say,

I would not that these letters only

Should be the sad memorials lonely

Of something that had pass'd away !

I would not read the words I loved so,
Knowing their meaning gone and dead,
A bitter mockery of Pleasure,
The echo of a joyful measure
After the melody had fled !

Then, whilst I still can hope He loves me,
Then, whilst His love may last, I pray,
As warm, as passionate, as this is,
Go ! wet with tears, go ! warm with kisses,
Into the flames, and fade away !



HIS NAME.

O H ! for some new-coin'd name by which to call
him !

Oh ! for some name no other lips can give !
“Love” has been said by those who loved so coldly,
“Life” has been said by those who could not *live* !

“Darling,” the sweetest name without a meaning,
“Soul,” often said to many a soulless thing,
“Dearest,” oft said to those who are not dearest,
“Treasure,” to what is not worth treasuring !

Oh ! I would have his new-found name mean “*Beauty*,”
And I would have his new-found name mean “*Love*,”
Oh ! and his name must also mean “*For ever*,”
Whilst there is Earth beneath and Heav’n above !

And I would have it also mean “*a Blessing*,”
And I would have it also mean “*a Shrine*,”
And I would have it also mean “*a Longing*,”
And it must also mean that he is *mine* !

And I would have it also mean "*my Idol*,"
And I would have it also mean "*my breath*,"
Life of the very life I live and breathe from,
Soul, that will even warm my very death !

Where shall I find this magic name to give him?
How shall I learn to spell this hidden word?
Oh ! shall I find it cradled on the zephyr?
Or lurking in the wood-notes of the bird ?

Or, far away, where yonder pink horizon
Lures on the Night with many a golden streak,
There, whisper'd in the clear-toned notes of Angels,
Oh ! some day, shall I find the name I seek ?

✓



IDOLATRY.

God, who alone knows whence we came,
 Made us half fire, and half of clay,
 Fire, which consumes the earth away,
 And earth, extinguishing the flame.

Sometimes a flame, sometimes a clod,
 Earth-bound, or looking to the skies,
 So is my soul, but either wise,
 On earth, I look to *you* as God !

Above me, on His golden throne
 I seem to see, 'twixt darkness riven,
 The God of *All*, in highest Heaven,
 A Being terrible—unknown—

Holding the puppets, Life and Death,
 At times allowing them their will,
 Or bidding them, at times, be still,
 And chiding them, with awful breath !

To countless worlds and kingdoms more
Hurling, from His high hunting-grounds
Blessings and curses, as to hounds
Are flung the scraps they scramble for—

Dealing new forms of Life and Death,
Or unnamed gifts, unlike our own,
New kinds of happiness, and woes unknown,
Unguess'd by us, who crawl beneath !

Giving His will of snow and hail
To unknown continents, which lie
(Shaming our poor geography),
Out of our ken,—beyond our pale—

Or lending summer-tide and light
Or what to us seems bright and warm,
To countless myriads, who swarm
Beyond what we have called our sight.

Crush'd by such thoughts, yet feeling *here*
The sparks of some eternal fire
Warm at the heart of my desire,
Knowing some part of God is near—

(For 'midst this ill-match'd human crew,
 Some have, like *me*, pow'r to create
 The idols that they consecrate,
 Others seem God-like, made like *you*),

And if this ray of heav'nly fire
 (Seen or imagined, felt or guess'd,
 Rising in *mine*, or in *your* breast)
 Can cleanse my heart, and raise it higher--

Far from this surging sea below,
 To Him who sent it me, this beam,
 Like an unutter'd pray'r, may seem,
 The worship of the God I know;

He (that great Pow'r by whom 'twas giv'n)
 May view with kind immortal eyes
 My soul's idolatry arise
 From *you*, my heav'n, to *His* high Heav'n.

And as my flutt'ring pinions soar
 To those bright realms, where He may be,
 May pardon the sweet blasphemy
 Which makes me know and love Him more !

And if, before me, o'er the wave
Of far Eternity's blue sea,
My Idol's soul should float, and be
Commingled with the God who gave ;

Then, lifting up to His high throne
The voice of an adoring pray'r
(Feeling my whole of Heav'n is there),
God and my Idol will seem one !



"OH ! LET IT BE FOR LONG!"

IF it is not for ever,
Oh ! let it be for long !
Oh ! do not too lightly sever
A link so dear and so strong !

Whilst I have pow'r to please thee,
Whilst my poor presence charms,
Never will I release thee,
Thy prison shall be my arms !

But when the spell is over
That bids thee linger nigh,
Then fly to another and love her—
She will love thee less than I.

And when thy soft lip presses
Hers, who more dear may be,
The ghosts of my dead caresses
Will glide between her and thee !

Then e'en if not for ever,
 Oh, let it be for long !
Oh ! do not too lightly sever
 A link so dear and so strong !



“I LIVE MY LIFE AWAY FROM THEE !”

AS the sad sighing of the wind that blows
 Outside the windows that we firmly close
 Against its breath, or as the distant sea
 Murmurs afar, and is not always heard
 But only when no louder sound is stirr'd,
 So, under all, through all, my being flows
 This song, “ I live my life away from thee ! ”

What matter, if the years bring good or ill?
 What can they hope, who ever hope on still
 Against all Hope? And after Hope is dead?
 Oh ! lost, lost Love ! Oh ! bitterer than this,
 Love I have known,—Love I have loved to kiss
 Yet cannot hold ! Love, I have loved my fill
 Yet thirst for now ! What shall I love instead ?

Oh, Love ! oh, Life ! will it be always so,
 Through my whole life, and wheresoe'er I go ?
 Oh ! how so fair the sights that I may see
 What will they profit me ? Thou art not here !
 And ever, ever, ringing in mine ear
 I seem to hear, in accents sad and low,
 The words, “ I live my life away from thee ! ”

What takes his place, that is worth harbouring,
Love the Immortal, Love, the only King
Time, the great leveller, can ne'er dethrone ?
What may we clasp, whose arms have closed on him
Who can rule soul, and breath, and life, and limb ?
What other leader is worth following ?
Who can know other loves, him having known ?

Oh ! in the sea of such a dear delight
Let me be buried deep and out of sight !
Drown'd in the waters of that sweet warm sea,
Clinging to lips, that living, I may lose,
Dying the happy death that I would choose
Were it e'en given us to *die* aright !
But ah ! “ I die my death away from thee ! ”

Because most seeming loves are calm and cold,
Bought for a song and all as lightly sold,
Let not the ones who know Love *as he is*
Fling him away ! Of all that has been given,
Love is the gift that brings us nearer Heaven
Than any other gift the world can hold,
And perfect Love is nearest perfect bliss.

Then let me lose myself in his sweet ways,
Or let me die, before these golden days
 Die, or the pleasure of them dies in me !
Oh ! sweet were death, if only, half in death,
I could but silence that sad, sighing breath,
That even then, I fear me, would upraise
 The wail, “ I live and die away from thee !”



LOVE'S HOURS.

THE hours that we have pass'd together
 Would scarcely make one golden year,
 One golden year of sunny weather
 'Midst other years of darkness drear,
 Though, spread upon the grass, our kisses,
 Would warm a space as broad as this is,
 From there to here !

Stolen from a world of death and sorrow,
 These happy hours of life and bliss
 Enough of heav'ly joy can borrow,
 That Angels (could they look at this)
 Would surely shroud their wond'ring faces
 To see how much of Heaven's traces
 Lurk'd in a kiss !

Oh ! some have said that e'en the fleetness
 Of these dear hours we call our own,
 May lend them something more of sweetness
 Than would have clung to them alone.
 Ah ! who can say ? For who has striven
 To guess *which* pathway led to Heaven—
 Once Heav'n is known ?

Yet, should'st thou deem that they *have* guess'd it,
(The sages who have told us this),
Then, would to Heav'n that I could test it,
And cling for ever to thy kiss !
Then should I know if 'tis the fleetness
Of these dear hours that makes their sweetness,
Or whether their exceeding fleetness
Flows from their own surpassing sweetness,
Or what it is !



NEW YEAR'S DAY.

AS, in a week, alternate days
Are bright with sun, or dark with storm,
As some are chill, and some are warm
With southern winds, and sunny rays—

So, in men's lives, the changing years
Bring mirth or sorrow, joy or pain,
Some heralded with merry strain,
Some with a passing bell, and tears ;

But as those years, that now are gone
With drooping heads, and folded wings,
Into the dusk of bygone things,
Resembled not this new-fled one—

So, to the hearts that now are sad,
May come new hopes of joy and peace,
So, to the gay, fears lest they cease,
Those joys that made the past year glad !

To thee and me, the uncoin'd hour
May bring a world of change unguess'd,
(Save to that love, which in my breast
Blooms like some fair immortal flow'r).

For *thee* I wish each coming day
May bring upon its bosom fair
Some hidden blessing, and that Care
At its light step may haste away !

And as for *me*, no greater bliss
I ask of Time, than that he may
Bring thy heart nearer mine each day,
And thy lips nearer to my kiss !

Or if, to both, the coming years
Are bound in equal share to bring
New pleasures, and new sorrowing,
Take *thou* the smiles, leave *me* the tears !



“AFTER LONG YEARS.”

AS I stand upon the pathway where I saw you
standing last,
I look vainly for your footprints, for so many more
have pass'd ;
They have press'd upon those dear ones, and have
trodden them away,
And these others, that came after, will be trodden out
as they.
Then I think “Life is a pathway, and the footprints
are the years,
Where our sorrows mock our laughter, and our smiles
efface our tears,
As with *living*, so with *loving*, changing figures come
and go,
Sweeping out each other's footmarks with their flit-
tings to and fro.”
Ah ! my Darling, then I wonder if at sunset, when you
gaze
O'er the country you have travell'd, with its sad and
pleasant ways,

Will you mark where fell *my* footsteps on your path-way for a space,
Ere the coming feet of others shall have swept away their trace?
Can I think it? dare I hope it? when together hand in hand,
For a little while we journey'd,—when our shadows on the sand
Seem'd as *one* for but one moment, and alas! then *two* again,
Dare I hope that any record of my passing will remain?
Or, when in your mem'ry's mirror all your vanish'd loves shall pass,
Will *my* shadow linger longer than those others in the glass?
With a look half sad, half mocking,—half in smiles and half in tears,
Will my lips waft something to you like the kiss of bygone years?
When *I* vanish, who will follow? Will you loose or hold her fast?
Will she linger as I linger'd? Will she pass as others pass'd?

In the dim uncertain future, who shall come you may
not guess,

She may sweep me from your mem'ry with the trailing
of her dress ;

You may lose me in her beauty, and forget me in her
smile,

And her breath may fade the picture that you cherish'd
for a while.

Hast'ning past those days of sunshine, when our lives
seem'd merged in one,

From the sunshine you may hurry to the presence of
the sun,

For it may be that the moments were but wasted
loving me,

Or only the foreshadowing of happier ones to
be !

But ah ! if they love more fondly (future love or future
wife),

If my living was not loving—if my loving was not
Life,

Oh ! then drive my tremb'ling spirit from the thresh-
hold of your heart,

Let me hear you taunt and mock me as I shudder
and depart !

Let me see the eyes I worshipp'd on another shed
their beams,
And then let me fade forgotten to the chilly land of
dreams !

• • • • •

Ah ! I fain would drop the curtain on my wand'ring
thoughts that range,
For here nothing can be certain but the certainty of
change ;
Dare we promise, or un-promise, to remember or
forget,
Knowing all the changeling changes that the Future
may beget ?
But the Present is our own still, and I hug and hold
it fast,
As the sailor in a tempest fastens wildly to the mast ;
For I know not, if I loose it, what my future fate
may be ;
Are the waters sweet or bitter of that dim unfathom'd
sea ?
Till our "Never" is "For ever," till "To-morrow" is
"To-day" ;
Till all Future things are Present, till our Present
fades away ;

Dare we plan or dare we promise? All the voices of
my mind

Seem to say, "Beware and tremble, lest to-morrow be
not kind ;

Lest *your* Heaven be not Heaven—lest *your* Idol should depart ; ”

But "I love you, oh! *I love you!*" say the voices of
my heart.

Oh ! forsake me, and forget me, Oh ! be cruel and
unkind ;

I forget it—I forgive it ! round your life my love is
twined ;

You have made my world a heaven, you have fill'd
my soul with bliss,

And the thirst of all my being is forgotten in your kiss!

Ah ! my Darling, on the pathway of the life that I
have trod

Deeply printed are your footsteps, like the footsteps of
a god :

Treading out all fainter traces—seal'd for ever in the sand.

Marking which were pleasant places in that unforget-
gotten land !

And your shadow, not as *others*, will it fade away and pass,
I shall stretch my arms towards it when I see it in the glass;
I shall cling to it and kiss it,—I shall whisper to it,
 “Stay !”
For your mem’ry shall be my love, when *your* love has pass’d away ;
Oh ! then love me for a little, for I live but for your smile,
Betwixt coming loves and going, let me linger for a while !
If you leave me can I blame you ? Shall I hunger for you less ?
No forsaking makes forgetting ! In my haunted loneliness,
I shall bow before the Power that reclaims what has been given,
And live upon *his* memory who made the earth seem Heaven.



“TOUT VIENT A QUI SAIT
ATTENDRE.”

ALL hoped-for things will come to you
Who have the strength to watch and wait,—
Our longings spur the steeds of Fate,—
This has been said by one who knew.

She loved you when your heart was cold,
Her eyes said “yes” when yours said “nay,”
You love,—her heart is turn’d away
And beats no longer as of old !

He sang to her at early dawn,
She turn’d away and would not hear ;
She seeks him now, he is not near,
She craves his love—his love is gone !

She pray’d for yours—you long for hers ;
Hers lived last year, yours lives to-day ;
His lived, but now has pass’d away,—
And when she calls no answer stirs !

How make it well for him—for her ?

How clip the pinions of her heart

To give to his the longer start ?

For whom the rein ?—to whom the spur

Ah, darling ! could we run this race
(This race of *loving*), side by side,
I should gain knowledge how to ride,
To keep our hearts at equal pace !

But ah ! betwixt us sea and plain
Are stretch'd afar in dreary line,
And if your longing equals mine,
Or if your loving wax or wane,

I know not, for I cannot see,
So far from mine your pathway lies,
In vain I strain my weary eyes,
Your life is lived away from me !

Ah ! rare, indeed, if heart to heart,
If soul to soul can cling and turn,
If love for love can breathe and burn
When each is torn so far apart !

Ah ! “All things come to those who wait”—

(I say these words to make me glad).

But something answers soft and sad

“They *come*, but often come *too late!*”



LOVE IN WINTER.

THE ground is white with driven snow
“How cold!” say they who do not know
For warmth and shelter where to go,

(I know! I know!)

• • • • • • • • •
• • • • • • • • •
• • • • • • • • •
Cling to me! Love me! Kiss me, *so!*
And warm’d by Love’s delicious glow
Forget that there is Death or Snow!

Again! ah! so!



TO A PORTRAIT.

I GAZE once more upon your pictured face,
Oh ! you who made my weary life so glad !
Till with the light I see within your eyes
My soul is madden'd, and I almost fear
To look, whilst I am missing you alone,
Upon this tempting mockery of Heaven !
Oh ! all too faithful likeness of my love !
He looks as when his arms embraced me last,
When all the ardent azure of his eyes
Look'd up towards me, melting into mine.
Oh ! cruel picture ! passionate yet cold,
Warm icy image of the one I love !
Hide out of sight those lips I cannot kiss,
And press'd against the heart that beats for *him*,
Sleep till the dawn.—Yet listen to my dreams
(If that which has not voice may haply hear,)
And when the gold that veils this eager glance
Is warm and throbbing from my throbbing heart,

Then will you learn the secrets of my soul
And all my breast has hidden until now,
For knowing that these speaking lips are mute
I shall not fear to dream of Love and him.
Good-night, dear Disappointment ! all too like
The one I love to make my slumber calm,
Feeling the little golden chain that clasps
Around the neck where once his arms have been !
Good-night, so like him, and yet *so* unlike,
To let me kiss and cling to you alone !
Send me your kinder semblance in a dream,
And let me pass away these hours of night
With one so like to you, yet so unlike !



IN YEARS TO COME.

THE years to come may sweep away
What now we prize, and turn to grey
This curly dark brown hair,
The years may dim these ardent eyes
And turn to tender memories
These moments that seem fair.

Yet, if they leave me still your kiss,
All else they steal I shall not miss,
And folded in your arms
The voice I love will sound as sweet
As now, whilst kneeling at my feet
You praise my youthful charms !

Our eyes may be too tired to read,
But book or pen we shall not need,
Since, echoing in each breast,
Will linger still the tender truth,
The history that in our youth
We used to love the best !

Then bless these moments ere they fade,
(For, Curly Head, this song is made
For you and only you !)
And whilst your heart is young and light,
And whilst your hair is brown and bright,
And whilst your eyes are blue,
Lay up a store for future hours
Of fleeting love's departing flow'rs
Which I will treasure too.



THE COQUETTE.

I LISTEN'D, scarcely knowing that I listen'd,
It nestled in my unsuspecting breast,
I mark'd its plumage fair, and eyes that glisten'd,
And smoothed with careless hand its golden crest.
I call'd it now a curse, and now a blessing,
I fondled it, I tortured, and caress'd,
Till wearied of my teasing and caressing,
It flew away, and yet I never guess'd—
• • • • • • •
It flew away, and as I watch'd it flying,
And saw its pinions fluttering above,
I stretch'd my arms towards it, wildly crying,
“ Return ! and be again my captive dove ! ”
But ah ! its gentle voice made no replying,
In vain to lure it back to me I strove—
And all the voices of my heart are sighing,
“ Ah ! it was Love ! ”

“HE WILL NOT COME!”

H E will not come ! The dim deserted street
Is black and silent, save when now and then,
The passing feet (alas !) of other men
Deceive my aching heart and make it beat—
He will not come !

Ah ! who is it that makes him break his tryst,
And almost her poor heart who waits him now,
Pressing against the window-pane the brow,
And longing lips he has so often kiss'd ?
He will not come !

He will not come ! and somewhere far away
His ears may hear the echo of my moan,
His eyes may see me watching here alone,
His heart may guess my anguish as I say,
“ He will not come ! ”

"He will not come!" the words are like a knell,
I drop the curtain that with hopeful hand
I drew aside, yet linger where I stand,
All loth to bid his memory farewell,
He will not come!

He will not come! ah! absent one, good night!
Good night, sad street, good night, dear shelt'ring
tree!
Good night! good night! to all that breathes of thee;
One more last look—good night to love and light!
He will not come!



ON A GLOOMY DAY.

THE year is past, and you and I
No longer tread life's path together,
And clouds are gathering in the sky,
That seem'd so bright in ev'ry weather !

For, folded to my darling's breast,
I could not turn aside to know
If winds were blowing east or west,
Or clouds were dealing rain or snow !

I did not think of north or south,
I heeded not the angry skies,
But breathed my zephyrs from his mouth,
And saw my summer in his eyes !

Oh ! near the heart that seem'd so warm,
I did not feel this chilling blast,
And I have smiled at rain and storm,
And mock'd the tempest as it past !

But now, alas ! I am alone,
And I can see the drifting rain,
And I have time to hear the moan
Of tempests that are here again.

Ah ! you who plant my life with flow'rs,
And make all skies to seem so blue,
Come back to me, and light the hours,
That darken at the loss of you !

Ah ! could we end this weary strife
And soul to soul, and heart to heart,
Be each the sunshine of the life,
That fate now bids us live apart,

Then might the ceaseless torrents pour,
And lightnings follow ev'ry kiss,
I should not fear the thunder's roar,
Or dread a day as dark as this.



MY RECORDS.

THE words that are spoken are soon forgotten,
 Music is played, and then dies in the air ;
 But all these my children—my soul-begotten,
 Will live to me longer than tune or pray'r.

The lines that are written and sealed and treasured
 May breathe of too much, or may seem too cold,
 Whilst these that are written and rhymed and measured
 Can tell far more tenderly all they have told.

Ah ! and far more plainly than old tunes playing,
 And far more distinctly than pictured scroll,
 These words that the voice of my heart is saying
 Will bring my love of you back to my soul !

In days that fear neither loving nor losing,
 The days that are dawning or may not dawn,
 The breath of my songs will prevent from closing
 The wavering curtains that Time has drawn.

And from ev'ry page, like a faded blossom,
Whose colours are dimm'd, but whose fragrance
clings,
These written words that once lived in my bosom
Will tell their old home of departed things ;

And out of the Past, as I gaze in sorrow
On records of love that was loved in vain,
The dream of my youth in that dim to-morrow
Will seem to come back to my arms again !



LONDON.

I LIKE to think that when your love has waned
 London will still stand on, and be to me
 The noisy echo of your silent voice !
 I like to think of all the streets and squares
 Where once your shadow fell, or did not fall,
 When I have watch'd for it !

Ah ! woods and fields

And forest-glades will tell me much of you ;
 But Nature changes more than these dim walls
 Into the which your memory seems built
 To gild them like a sunbeam till they fall ;
 And far away from all those sylvan scenes
 I cannot hear your laughter in the brook,
 Or trace your pathway in the broken fern,
 Whilst *here* a hundred dark and stone-paved ways
 Re-echo to my heart the step of Love !

I like it to be thus, and often think
 “ Ah ! *here*, or *there*, my heart will always beat

A little faster, e'en in after years ;
Here is a spot my eyes will never see
Without in fancy seeing what they loved
Above all else !"

 Ah ! desolate to me
Will then seem all these many-peopled streets
As those of ancient cities, hid away
For thousand years beneath the lava-flood,
And brought to light when all their life is fled !

I hardly dare to think upon such days,
Whilst yet the glamour of a rising sun
Makes all this mist seem mingled pink and gold ;
But now and then a shiv'ring passing form,
And all the loveless looks of other men,
These tell me that to many heavy hearts
London is now a city of the dead,
And they but wanderers amongst the tomb.

To such as these I have not time to turn
(You make my life a hey-day of delight !)
But, going to and fro, at morn and eve
Betwixt my Happiness and my Regret,
I meet these pallid forms and pass them by

Yet after, conscience-like, they haunt my dreams,
And all the impotence of woman's life,
With all its small desires, and vain resolves,
And loves (may be as vain !) like a reproach
These haunt me too !

Oh ! London, many-voiced !
Great city, where my love has lived and breathed,
Live on, and reign the dusky Queen of Towns !
Had this hand strength, thine unabolish'd wrongs
Had been redress'd, and all thy fever-fogs
Dispersed, as with a fairy's magic wand !
Live on, dear city ! for my darling's sake,
Live on, when this poor voice is mute to bless
The heedless witness of my youth and love !
And bright as all thy streets seem now to me
Would they could be to all thy chequer'd world !



A DREAM OF THE SOUTH.

OFTEN, when I am musing here alone,
Slowly there fades from me this present scene,
And other sights and sounds that once have
been
But are not now, crowd on me one by one.

Sometimes the jing'ling voice of southern chimes
Rung out from cupolas of painted tiles,
Sometimes a black-eyed peasant woman smiles
From some pink home, built as in warmer climes.

Sometimes once more my spirit wanders through
That garden with its fragrant orange-trees,
And sees between the shining leaves of these
Glimpses of tideless ocean, oh ! so blue.

Or else, I see a patch of rich red earth,
Four foot-prints planted in it, and a vine,
Blue-coated muleteers, in stragg'ling line,
Coming with sounds of sweet-toned bells and mirth.

A palm-tree which its drooping feathers spreads
Above the painted gateway of a town
With quaint dark streets, and, passing up and down,
Women who knit, with loads upon their heads.

What sentiment my heaving bosom fills
At these remembrances, however small !
The sharp black shadow of a sun-lit wall,
The distant view of purple wooded hills !

The pointed aloe, in its green glazed pot,
The red-capp'd boatmen in the glitt'ring bay,
The islands in the distance, far away,
That it all look'd so bright I wonder not !

Yet was it all so bright ? I do not know ;
Perhaps it only seem'd so doubly fair
Seen with four eyes, and ev'ry breath of air
Breathed through four lips, but ah ! it did seem so !

.

These scenes a man and woman wander'd through,
Their shadows falling on the dusty plain
Seem'd sometimes to be one, then two again,
Then melted into one, alas ! then *two* !

The peasants paused to watch them as they pass'd,
And as the vines their sun-burnt fingers train
Along the trellis-work of yellow cane,
So did she cling to him, and hold him fast.

They thought them bound by far more lawful ties
Than those which join'd their lips and lock'd
their hands,
And made them wander thus in sunny lands
Led by the light in one another's eyes !

On, on, through all these flow'ry paths they roam
Clinging together in the sunny glow,
As only those can cling who seem to know
They soon must part,—that here is not their home !

And as she clings, a voice she seems to hear
Which says to her, "Alas ! you still are two !
No words that you can say,—no deeds you
do
Can make you one ! Oh ! to be still more near !"

.

Sometimes she wish'd some danger would come near,
 Some sudden lightning-flash or robber's knife
 Or something threatening to take his life,
So that she might cry, "Spare him, but strike *here!*!"

Thus to have died, sometimes she thought were best
 Than to live on through changes and through years,
 Knowing, alas ! that all her future tears
Could not be dried upon that loving breast !

So, with strange fancies and with strange desires,
 They wander on (so seems it in my dream,
 For it may be these beings only *seem*,
Or that some oft-told tale my thought inspires),

They wander on, until, anon, a cloud
 Seems to enfold them darkly over head ;
 Again they see the light—they are not dead,
But *something* lies enveloped in a shroud !

Further apart, yet casting longing eyes
 On the dear country they have left behind,
 Still stretching hand to hand, with fingers twined,
And sighing for the warmth of those lost skies,

Thus are they now (or so they seem to be) ;
Then slowly do I put the picture by,
Whilst a strange chilly wind, I know not why,
Seems with its icy breath to blow on me :

Longing for something that returns no more,
The yearning after something left behind,
Something that haply I might one day find
Could I return again to that warm shore.

These are the thoughts that animate my breast
As these lost forms and scenes revive again,
But what *has* been was sweet, and this dull pain
Is not too dearly bought by all the rest !

Sometimes I see that woman of my dream,
And wonder if her breath can fan to light
That yet warm memory of past delight
Which still within her bosom seems to gleam.

Sometimes I see the man that woman knew,
Sometimes distinctly—sometimes dim to me ;
Sometimes I say, “ Ah ! yes, it must be he ! ”
But ah ! it is not he ! (it is not *you* !)

And if that man and woman ever meet
In after-mood, and after other years,
What they will say between their falling tears
Will be, I think, " 'Tis past, but it was sweet!"



SO LATE!

MY happiness has come to me so late ;
Had it come earlier, I had almost fear'd
That long ere this the thunderclouds had near'd,
Bearing some fatal bolt to compensate.

For, like those Indians, who, when joy is near,
Bow to the earth, and fear to be too glad,
Lest their offended god should make them sad,
So I, too bless'd by you, seem half to fear.

But since my bliss has come to me so late,
I hope the while I fear, postponing yet
My dread anticipation of the debt,
That Love has made me feel I owe to Fate.



A REPROACH.

SHOULD you and I live on, my own,
 Till Time has made us old and grey,
 I, looking back, may haply say,
 "I marvel not that Time has flown
 So quickly ! Cruel one !" (to *you*),
 "I blame you for those years that flew !"

For had you never been to me
 What your dear lips have sworn you were,
 The slave of one who did not dare
 To own to you her slavery,
 And had your love ne'er brighten'd o'er
 The path that was so dark before :

Then Time may be his wings had stay'd,
 And this mad clock had halted too,
 And both our lives had loiter'd through
 Their destined years of sun and shade ;
 But since you made the years so bright,
 I do not wonder at their flight !

Oh ! do not let them lag, my own,
These strangely variable hours !
For then my life would miss the flow'rs
The kisses of your mouth have sown :
But do not make them fly too fast
These blissful hours that cannot last.

Oh ! would, my love, that I had pow'r,
(Since Time has proved so false a friend,
And bids these happy moments end),
To break the clock and stay the hour,
And keep it standing on for aye
At this dear hour that steals away !

Oh ! weeks and months and years that fly !
Each blights some blossom midst the flow'rs
With which youth crowns this life of ours,
And fancies, faiths, and beauties die ;
But oh ! I pray the gods may give
To you the will to let *this* live !

Oh ! what I mean by "this," my own,
Is something you and I have felt,
When both our souls have seem'd to melt
Into that something few have known ;

Too sacred this to write or rhyme,
'Twas this that urged the wings of Time !

Then let us love them now, my own,
These days and nights of dear delight !
And may the thought that they were bright
Cheer our sad lives when Love has flown,
Though now I feel my heart must die,
Before my love for you will fly !



AH ! REMEMBER.

DARLING remember ! Do not hide in darkness
All the small nothings that recall me to you !
The thousand little things, which but to glance at
Must even force an alter'd heart to ponder,
Oh ! do not cast the “ You and I ” for ever
Out of the life that may be lived without me,
Or, like a closed-up volume that is finish'd,
Put not the story we have read together
Upon the crowded shelf to lie forgotten !

Ah ! remember !

Remember all the days before we reach'd it
(Our gate of heaven where we sat in sunshine),
The eager hopeful days, the days of sorrow,
The days of doubt, and all the days of longing,
And that *one* day, a day that was predestined,
And that *one* hour that bore within its bosom
The sixty little moments of our madness,
And *one*—the maddest, *and*, alas ! the fleetest— !

Ah ! remember !

Ah ! yes, remember ! All the heath was golden,
Ten thousand budding flowers told of spring-tide,
And all my heart was warm with it and sadden'd,
The sun-light splash'd the fern with yellow patches,
The voices of the birds said "Love me ! Love me !"
I listen'd to the birds, I watch'd the insects
That flutter'd captive thro' the snowy mazes
Of the white dress I wore to welcome summer ;
I watch'd, as in a dream, the home-returning
Of million flies and bees all honey-laden ;
And all the world seem'd warm with Love and
Summer,—

Waiting, I knew not why, but still for something,
Longing, I knew not why, but still for some one,
When on the garden gravel fell a footstep,
And all my soul knew wherefore it was waiting,
And both our hearts were warm with Love and
Summer—!

Ah ! remember !

Ah ! then remember, when the day was fading,
And all the southern sea was flush'd and rosy,
We watched it hand in hand, all loth to lose it—
The happy daylight that had shone upon us !

Half blinded with the glory of the sunset,
Its beauty drew our longing lips together,
And we forgot the sunset in our kisses—!

Ah! remember!

Remember too, those ev'nings in the Winter,
When, by the glowing hearth, with candles shaded,
I sat and waited, longing for your coming !
I did not wait you long, my own ! my darling !
For scarcely had the first clock finished striking
When on the stair I heard your eager footstep.
The door is closed upon us—we are silent,
My warm lips strive to thaw the breath of Winter
Upon your cheek, and kiss the chilly clusters
Of the dear curly head upon my bosom.
Oh ! when I am not near, in other winters,
Or when, may be, another's arms enfold you,

Ah! remember!

Remember, too, the daybreak of our parting ;
For, by the flickering light of future fires,
One of our two poor hearts must watch in sadness.
Which will it be ? Then, in the summer weather,
The sun will seem all mockery in his brightness,
And all the many words *one* would have spoken,

Will die unutter'd ; then by sunny fountains,
And by the shores of that dear tideless ocean,
A stricken soul will wander, heavy hearted.
Ah ! if it should be you, then in the twilight,
Watching the sunset we have watch'd so often,
Your shadow falling where ours fell together,
Or when you see the open empty window,
Where once these eyes of mine look'd out their wel-
come,
And tread again the pathway we ascended,

Ah ! remember !

Remember, ah ! but do not with a shudder,
Turn from the memory. Oh ! let me linger
A little in your life when mine is ended !
Not as a living thing, but as great rivers
Sometimes conceal some secret undercurrent,
So let me be to you. Of thoughts and fancies,
Let me be still the queen—your soul my kingdom,
My feeble sceptre, all your mem'ry clings to.
Oh ! I would rule your soul by written letters,
Or by the silent lips of painted pictures,
By books that we have read, by thoughts and actions,
By spoken words, and words that are unspoken,
(For maybe you will guess, should I be absent,

The thought that would have flashed across my spirit
At this or that.) In all the pleasant places,
By tideless seas, in those blue skies unclouded,
There would I like to hover near my darling,
And hand in hand, unchanged, unseparated,
Cling on through time and tide to some great ending,
Or some beginning of some new to-morrow !

Ah ! remember !

Oh ! let us by united will, endeavour
To open unimagined gates of meeting,
And scale all former fences of division !
Ah ! well-explored, yet undiscover'd country,
To those who linger still in doubt and darkness ;
To some fond few, to whom Earth has been Heaven,
The dim Siberia of their banishment ;
But to so many more the hoped-for haven,
Where all their batter'd barks find anchorage ;
To meet you there, or feel some influence,
To tell me you are present in the spirit,
We needs must triumph over Death and distance ;
And that your after-eyes may see and know me,
I say to you at ev'ry earthly parting,

“Ah ! remember !”

BEFORE AND AFTER.

BEFORE I knew my Soul's delight
 How often have I watch'd alone
 The garden glades, that blooming bright
 In all their summer glory shone ;
 The fern that feather'd fresh and green,
 The tall ox-daisies in the grass,
 The fragrant-smelling eglantine,
 And only sigh'd, " Alas ! alas !
 Oh ! wasted hours ! oh, wasted days !
 My heart is sadden'd as I gaze ! "

Even the shadow of a bird
 Upon the daisy-spangled lawn
 Each hidden pulse within me stirr'd ;
 The dewy freshness of the dawn
 Seem'd profitless and good for naught ;
 And when the soft warm day had waned,
 Its beauty grieved me, for I thought,
 " To-day is lost, and what is gain'd ?
 Oh ! wasted hours ! oh ! wasted days !
 My heart is sadden'd as I gaze ! "

Oh ! days that fled I know not how !
So slow, and yet withal, so fleet !
The bud seem'd scarcely on the bough,
Scarcely the rose's breast was sweet,
Before the leaves grew crisp and sere,
And all the earth was damp and chill,
Whilst Autumn winds seem'd ev'rywhere
To make the same sad murmur still—
“Oh ! wasted hours ! oh ! wasted days !
My heart is sadden'd as I gaze !”

Each thing of beauty seem'd to me
A mockery, a vain deceit,
The promise of some joy to be
That never would be mine to meet,
Or else the echo of a strain
Of some such music as mine ears
Had long'd and listen'd for in vain
Through all the waiting weary years—
“Oh ! wasted years ! oh ! wasted days !
My heart is sadden'd as I gaze !”

Yet when at Christmas-tide the bells
Rang mournful joy-proclaiming chimes,
They sounded like the fun'ral knells
Of what seem'd almost happy times.
And as I thought "Another year,
Another wasted year has flown,"
A hundred mocking voices near
Echo'd from city spires the moan,
"Oh ! wasted years ! oh ! wasted days !
My heart is sadden'd as I gaze !"

But even as I mused and dream'd
The old life faded quite away,
And all the golden sunlight stream'd
And warm'd my being with its ray !
Ah ! then for me the garden glow'd,
Ah ! then for me a silv'ry voice
Sang in the river as it flow'd,
And whisper'd to my heart "Rejoice,
The days of Death are gone and past,
And Life and Love are here at last !"

Ah ! sailing now on sunny seas
With such a new and dear delight
My heart grows light again, and these
(The days of sadness and of night,)
Seem far behind our golden sails,
Fill'd with the breath of Love's sweet voice,
Whilst over sea-bound hills and vales
I hear the echo'd words, "Rejoice,
The days of Death are gone and past,
And Life and Love are here at last !"

.

Oh ! when you read the words I sing
(Should those blue eyes but glance them o'er,)
Your heart will guess what hidden spring
Inspired my simple metaphor ;
And you will know who spread the sail,
Who made the world so bright to glow,
And ah ! in pity do not fail
Dear Love, to try and keep it so !
Then will the days of Death be past,
And Life and Love be here at last !

ALONE AT THE TRYST.

HERE, in the home of newly vanish'd love,
 A thousand things recall my heart's delight,
 A thousand silent witnesses unite
 To say, " 'Twas here we saw your kisses prove
 The waneless love of noonday and of night
 That warms your being ! " All around the air
 Seems freighted with those dear delights that were,
 And now are past. The clock, that seems to move
 Unlike the headlong time-piece of those days,
 Ticks with a sad distinctness, and it says
 To my lone heart, " I am the self-same clock
 Whose veering hands your own would once have stay'd,
 As, gazing at me wond'ring and aghast
 To think that happy moments flew so fast,
 You wrapp'd your cloak around you, half afraid,
 And vanish'd through yon door, whereon your knock
 Seem'd scarcely to have died—so quick I pass'd
 From minute unto quarter, racing on
 From half to whole, until I struck at last
 The doom of that sweet hour that now is gone ! "

Ah ! with how sad a heart I wander here,
From room to room, that seem so full of him,
Half thinking, as the Autumn light grows dim,
That he is only late, and must be near !

Or that my longing over land and sea
Will reach my love, and bring him back to me !

Vain foolish hope ! and yet I wait and wait,
Foolish and vain though my poor hope may be ;
The sad slow clock has told me it is late,
And in my heart of hearts alas ! I know
That far away, with hills and vales between
My darling cannot feel, and has not seen
My little flitting shadow come and go
And wait and watch and weep for what has been !

Oh ! "far away !" our journeys lie apart ;
Yet here, for some few hours in some short years
We mingle for awhile our hopes and fears,
And cling together straining heart to heart.

Ah ! in a life of bitterness and tears
How do I treasure this—its happiest part !

Come back to me, dear Idol ! for the shrine
Seems sad without you, and the bird will pine

In the lone nest all empty of her mate !
Come, where around all seems to watch and wait,
 Where even now the very walls and floors
Hope for your shadow and expect your tread,
Come to my longing breast and rest your head,
 And shut the cold world out with these dear doors !



CALM AND STORM.

IT is not often that we really love :
We have our frenzies and our ecstasies,
But that sweet tenderness when storms are past,
Or when, becalmed, we wait the hour of storm,
This, this is little cared for here on earth !

Upon thy breast my head is resting now,
And, shaken by the throb of that dear heart,
I cannot sleep, but thinking, half awake,
I wonder which is sweetest, calm or storm,
And, answering to my fickle woman's heart,
A thousand sad soft voices murmur "Calm!"
Ah ! trust me not, my lips are too near thine ;
And ere thy heart is quiet, like that bird
That whirls and eddies over foaming seas,
My traitor soul is longing for the storm !

“THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS.”

CALL them not past, though those bright days are ended,

And in the sea those autumn suns have set ;
Woven into my life they are, and blended

With all its sunshine, and I follow yet
In fancy those dear paths we two ascended ;

And though these days are darken'd by regret,
It is not for a *dead* thing I am sighing :

I weep no *vanish'd* joys, for in my heart,
Living for ever to me, underlying

The current of the life I live apart
From what seems more than life, there, there, undying,
Is what thou wert to me, and what thou art !

And to these sunless days that thought gives glory,

And warm to this my heart, that would wax cold
Without its magic, do I tell the story

Of all that (had they voice's) might unfold
Those spreading beech trees and those oak-trees
hoary,
Beneath whose tangled branches, uncontrolled

We wander'd hand in hand, and join'd to living
The happiness of living in the rays
Of our hearts' sun. Ah ! stern and unforgiving
And cold may be this world and all its ways ;
Yet in the midst of present tears and striving
Shines like a star the light of those dear days.

Well were they worth these moments of my sorrow,
And all the thorny paths through which we went
To reach our Heaven ; and I strive to borrow
Some glimmer of the radiance they lent,
To light me now, so that on this, the morrow,
Looking towards them, I can feel content !



MY KING.

O F this poor heart you ask me who is King,
 Since to your eyes so many seem to reign ;
 Alas ! the kingdom is so small a thing
 That, like the unaccepted throne of Spain,*
 Methought my little crown had gone unclaim'd,
 Or scorn'd maybe, if I had ever named
 Who was the King.

Both old and young pretenders oft have strove
 To plant their alien banners, and be King ;
 And all the hot artillery of love,
 With mad acclaim, has echo'd, thundering
 Its perilous appeal through all my heart,
 But of that stronghold, or its meanest part,
 They were not King.

Yet on that hidden throne a King is set,
 A tyrant, a more arbitrary king
 Than erst was Tudor or Plantagenet,
 And to this rebel kingdom did he bring

Such dear destruction, such sweet sophistry,
That if it could it would not now be free
From such a King.

At first it would not own his tender sway
And feared to call the dear usurper king,
But all its trusted bulwarks broke away,
Where they had seem'd the strongest, and the ring
Of "Victory!" resounded through the air
Before the vanquish'd knew the foe was there,—
And he was King!

Oh ! trebly crown'd as with a papal crown !
Of heart and soul and all my senses King !
Giver of all the bliss my life has known !
Sharer of all worth my remembering !
Creator of so many thoughts and schemes,
Of this my bond slave heart and all its dreams
You are the King !



COMPENSATION.

TO those who may have fail'd to gain
The treasure that I prize to-day,
(Lest they should envy me), I say
How long I strove for it in vain.

How dark and dreary were the years
(Lest they should deem my life *all* bliss),
Before at last I won the kiss
That dried the fountain of my tears.

How months and weeks and days pass'd by,
And how the lonely loveless night
Seem'd but to come to say that light
Had faded from the sullen sky.

How sleep seem'd sent me to forget,
And how my dreaming was a dread,
How daylight dawn'd and darkness fled
As sadly as the daylight set.

And how a dull and weary ache,
The thought that nothing good could be,
Came like a death-chill over me
When first I saw the morning break.

And then there came the dismal round
Of all the fruitless barren hours
Scatter'd like handfuls of fresh flow'rs
That wither wasted on the ground.

Alas ! the Winter's dreary gloom,
The aimless yearnings of the Spring !
The Autumn's silent withering,
And all the blinding summer bloom !

Long years of hopelessness, and how
Unsunn'd, unnourish'd save by tears,
My heart beat on thro' all the years
That, thanks to you, are brighten'd now !

Yet, lest to those whose lives have been
Less sad, and now may seem less bright,
My life should hold too much delight,
Too much of what they have not seen,

And lest they envy me the glow
Of sunshine that my sun has shed
Upon a path they may not tread,
I say "It was not always so:"

That they may know these golden years
Which Love has made to seem so bright,
Were heralded by darkest night
And earned in bitterness and tears.



LANCELOT AND GUINEVERE.

“ OH ! read to me some other lay,’
She cried to one about to read ;
“ I love to hear of tourney gay,
Of feats of arms and daring deed,

“ Yet read to-day some simple rhyme,
Or else some tender ballad sing,
And let me hear another time
The Idylls of the blameless king.”

Her husband did not seem to hear,
Or, if he heard, he heeded not,
And so he read of Guinevere
And of her love for Lancelot.

He read how first the rumour grew,
Unheard by him it harm’d the most,
And how the courtiers link’d their two
Unwedded names in song and toast ;

And how, "love-loyal" to her will,
The great knight sought within her eyes
Her wishes when her lips were still,
Ere striving for the diamond prize,

And how he did not read them right—
The lady sadden'd at each word :
"Alas," she sigh'd, "how true the knight !
How fair the queen ! how great her lord !"

She turn'd away and sigh'd anew
As in each act his love was seen,
And thought, "Ah ! I had loved him too
Were he my knight, were I his queen."

But when the poet told of how
His guilty love had darken'd o'er,
And marr'd the beauty of his brow
(Such love makes some men smile the more),

And how he did not lightly wear
The prize of which he made no boast,
'Twas then she deem'd him doubly fair,
'Twas then she felt she loved him most.

And when she heard of fair Elaine,
“ Alas ! it seemeth hard,” she sigh’d,
“ That he should let her love in vain
The hopeless love whereof she died.

“ But ah ! how loyal to his queen !
How warm the heart that seem’d so cold !
Hath ever knight so faithful been
Since he of whom the poet told ? ”

And when she heard how Elaine died,
And floated to him on her bier,
She turn’d away her head to hide
The falling of a passing tear.

But when Sir Lancelot had sought
The little reedy river cove,
And, all remorseful, sigh’d and thought
The *maiden’s* was the tend’rer love ;

Then throbb’d the heart of her who heard,
As though the spirit of the queen
Within her bosom lived and stirr’d,
And made of her what *she* had been :

And wildly to herself she said,

“The *woman’s* love ! the queen’s ! my own !

Ah ! could he covet in its stead

What but a love-sick girl has shown ?

“The sneering word, the tarnish’d name,

The galling mask for him she bore ;

She heeded not her loss of fame,

And risk’d the queenly crown she wore :

“For him she did not scorn to lie

To one whose very life was truth ;

She put her robes and sceptre by,

And crown’d him king of all her youth.

“That simple maiden could but prove

The love she bore him by her death ;

Give me to *live* for him I love,

To yield him heart and soul and breath !

“Give me the risk, the shame, the sin,

The love that can have nought to gain,

Save the fond hope one day to win

A dearer link to clasp the chain !

“ But read no more ! ” she cried aloud ;
Her cheek was flush’d and wild her eye,
Whilst on her brow the gath’ring cloud
Told of the tempest passing by.

“ Ah ! read no more,” she said again,
“ My ears are weary of the sound ! ”
And half in anger, half in pain,
She flung the book upon the ground.

“ Alas, for lawless love ! ” she sigh’d,
“ I share the cross of Guinevere ;
Like her my guilty secret hide,
Like her I earn the doom I fear.

“ To see one day his passion fade,
Or hear him say *mine* pales beside
The love of some such lily maid
As she who floated down the tide.

“ For *me* to steel my heart at need,
Nor let that live that makes love’s curse,
Then can I all unheeding read
The tender tales of poet’s verse.”

She bent her head and seem'd to pray,
Then, starting, listen'd to a sound,
Push'd back her hair, and dash'd away
The tears in which her eyes were drown'd.

With mantling cheeks and lips apart,
She waits and strains her anxious sight ;
And all the pulses of her heart
Seem quicken'd by some near delight.

Her lord stepp'd down upon the grass
And vanish'd in the twilight dim ;
Her guardian angel moan'd " Alas !
Alas for her ! alas for him ! "

Alas ! for erring woman's pray'r !
Reader and book alike forgot ;
She trembles, hearing on the stair
The coming step of Lancelot.



NOW.

TOYS, tears, and kisses—then a few more tears—
 (This is the burden of the changing years),
 And after (should our journey reach as far),
 The land where neither toys nor kisses are ;
 And further still, the loveless, listless years,
 Too cold for kissing and too tired for tears,
 (Ah ! spare me these !) and then—a dawning Day
 Or closing Night ? Alas ! we cannot say !

• • • • •

I.

My toys are broken now, and all put by,—
 My Queen of Dolls is now a Queen no more,—
 Or lost, or litter'd on the dusty floor
 In some forsaken lumber-room they lie.

2.

My *toys* are gone, but still I have my *tears*,
 (*These* linger with us for a longer while),
 Yet whilst I weep, I know that I can smile,
 I smile and weep, may be, some few short years.

3.

I have reach'd *kissing*—here my steps are slow,
So pleasant seems the pathway with its flow'rs,—
A few more kisses for a few more hours,
And then I reach a land I do not know !

4.

For I have only travell'd yet so far
As where the roses and the kisses cling,
And I can only dream of these, and sing
Of such as these, well knowing what they are !

5.

Anon, my heart may warm to colder things,
But *now* I mark with half unconscious eye
The current of events that rushes by,
Upraising Empires and dethroning Kings.

6.

Oh ! for those days when this our path is rough
With stones and briars, that now is green with spring,
Let us not coin ourselves a thought to sting—
The thought, “Alas ! we did not kiss enough.”

7.

Oh ! linger long, ye glad unfetter'd hours !
How far the sun-glow spreads I cannot say,
I feel it warm within my heart to-day,
I see the pathway blinded with its flow'rs !

8.

Then let me sing the glories of these days,
Let those who follow me, or go before,
Tell of the country they are passing o'er,
I know not *now* the pleasure of their ways !

9.

Oh ! sweet green garden in this life of man !
Oh Youth ! Oh Love ! Ah ! hasten not away ;
Ye pass before my lips can murmur "Stay !"
A star, set in the life-time of a span !

10.

Yes, almost ere this ink of mine is dry,
Whilst yet this scroll seems warmer from my hand
The restless atoms of appointed sand
Have trembled through the hour-glass and we die !

11.

These written words, these thoughts of Life and Death,
 These few sad rhymes I write to Love and you,—
 These all,—what are they? and my loving too?
 A little incense rising like a breath!

12.

Yet, take it! Ah! and if in after years
 This page, then long forgotten, meets your eye,
 Think once on one, before you lay it by,
 Who gave you *all* her kisses and her tears!

13.

Love of the life that you have bless'd to-day!
 Love of the life that I may have to live!
 Take all so poor a worshipper can give,—
 The changing dreams I dream—the pray'rs I pray:

14.

And give to *me*, 'ere yet these moments die,
 The bliss of half a death beneath thy kiss!
 Again, and yet again! Like this— and *this*!
Once more, my darling! ere I say Goodbye!

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